

A new lichen, *Melanohalea subexasperata* (Parmeliaceae), from the Tibetan Plateau

LI-YAN SUN^{1,2}, FAN-GE MENG¹, HONG-MEI LI³,
HAI-YING WANG^{1*} & ZUN-TIAN ZHAO^{1*}

Sunliyan1973@yahoo.cn * lichenwhy@yahoo.com.cn * ztzhao@sohu.com

¹College of Life Sciences, Shandong Normal University
Jinan, 250014, P. R. China

²College of Pharmacology, Taishan Medical University
Taian, 271016, P. R. China

³College of Life Sciences, Hebei University
Baoding, 071002, P. R. China

Abstract — A new *Melanohalea* species characterized by the presence of cortical hairs, *M. subexasperata*, is described from the Tibetan Plateau.

Keywords — Asia, China, lichenized fungi, taxonomy

Introduction

The lichen genera *Melanohalea* O. Blanco et al. and *Melanelixia* O. Blanco et al. in the *Parmeliaceae* were segregated from *Melanelia* Essl. based on molecular as well as chemical and morphological data (Blanco et al. 2004). *Melanohalea* is characterized by common pseudocyphellae, often on warts or isidial tips, and by a medulla containing depsidones or lacking secondary compounds (Blanco et al. 2004, Esslinger 1977). *Melanelixia* is characterized by often lacking pseudocyphellae and by containing lecanoric acid as the primary medullary constituent (Blanco et al. 2004, Esslinger 1977). Worldwide, *Melanelixia* includes nine known species, *Melanohalea* twenty species, and *Melanelia* still contains a heterogeneous residue of seventeen species (Esslinger 1977, 1978, 1987, 1992; Ahti et al. 1987, Egan 1987, Galloway & Jørgensen 1990, Thell 1995, Divakar et al. 2001, 2003; Blanco et al. 2004, Divakar & Upreti 2005, Wang et al. 2008).

Cortical hair is a very important taxonomic character in the brown parmelioid lichens. Produced by five *Melanelixia* species and three *Melanelia*

*Equal corresponding authors

species, the cortical hairs are lacking in all known *Melanohalea* species (Wang et al. 2008, 2009). However, during our study of the lichen flora of the Tibetan Plateau, an interesting *Melanohalea* species with cortical hairs new to science was found.

Materials and methods

The specimens studied were collected from the Tibetan Plateau, China, and are preserved in SDNU (Lichen Section of Botanical Herbarium, Shandong Normal University) and HKAS (Herbarium of Cryptogams, Kunming Institute of Botany Academia Sinica). The morphology of the lichen specimens was examined using a stereo microscope (COIC XTL7045B2) and a microscope (OLYMPUS CX21). Lichen substances in all specimens cited were identified using the standardized thin layer chromatography techniques (Culberson 1972). Photos of the thallus and cortical hairs were taken under OLYMPUS SZX12 with DP70 and OLYMPUS BX69.

Taxonomic description

Melanohalea subexasperata F.G. Meng & H.Y. Wang, sp. nov.

FIG. 1

MYCOBANK 514005

Melanohalea subexasperata tomentis corticibus a congeneribus diversa.

TYPE COLLECTION: CHINA. Yunnan province, Shangri-la, Tianshengqiao, alt. 3500m, on twigs, H.Y. Wang, 20084032, 3 November 2008. (Holotype in SDNU).

DESCRIPTION — Thallus foliose, appressed throughout, adnate, 1.5–10 cm in diameter. Lobes 0.2–2 mm broad, 75–100 µm thick, flat, short, and slightly elongate, discrete to more often contiguous or subimbricate. Upper surface dark olive-brown, shiny at lobe ends, inward becoming dull; occasionally lightly pruinose, bearing small, hyaline cortical hairs, especially on the apothecial margins; without soredia, isidia or lobules, but with numerous, evenly scattered, conical to short-cylindrical papillae, each bearing a conspicuous pseudocyphella at the tip. Lower surface black, often paler at the margin; smooth to wrinkled, dull to slightly shiny; moderately rhizinate, the rhizines simple, concolorous with the lower surface, to 1mm long. Apothecia common, sessile to short stipitate, concave to flattening, mostly 2 mm in diameter; margin very soon developing pseudocyphellate papillae, nearly always bearing cortical hairs, often with rhizines; hymenium 30–45 µm thick, subhymenium 10–20 µm thick; spores 8, globose to ellipsoid, 8–10 × 6–8 µm, spore wall 1 µm thick. Pycnidia rare; conidia 7–8 × 1 µm, acerose to weakly fusiform.

CHEMISTRY — Cortex K–, HNO₃–; medulla C–, K–, KC–, PD–; Constituents (8 specimens tested): no substances detected.

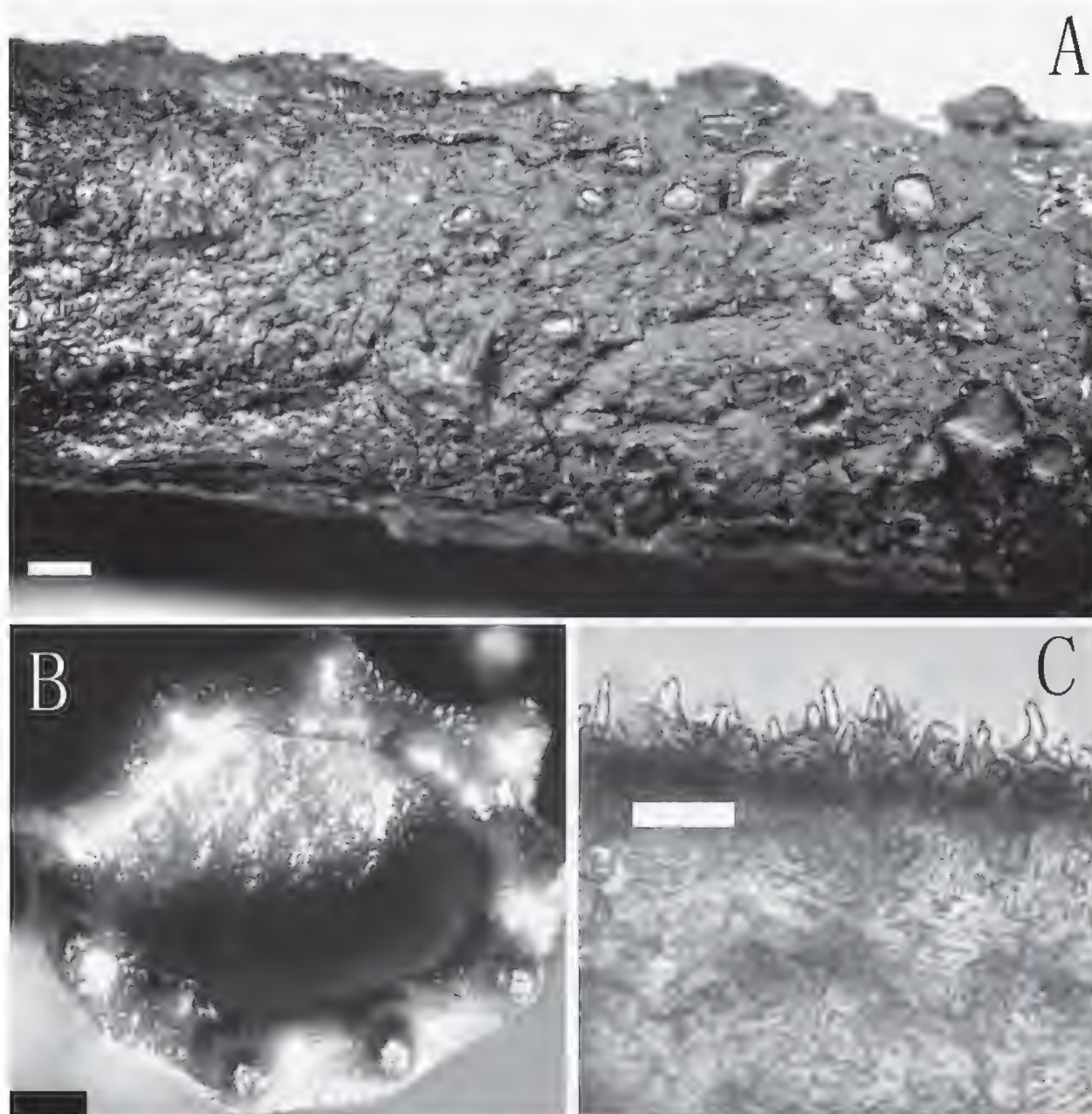


FIG. 1 Photographs of the holotype of *Melanohalea subexasperata*.
A. thallus (bar = 1mm). B. & C. showing cortical hairs on the apothecial margin
(B: bar = 100µm; C: bar = 20µm).

DISTRIBUTION AND SUBSTRATE —*Melanohalea subexasperata* is a corticolous species, found in the southeast of the Tibetan Plateau at elevations of 2700–3500m.

SPECIMENS EXAMINED —CHINA. YUNNAN: Shangri-la Co. TIANSHENGQIAO, alt. 3500m, on twigs, 3/xi/2008, H.Y. Wang 20084031, 20084032, 20084033, 20084034 (SDNU); BITAHAI, alt. 3500m, on twigs, 21/x/1994, L.S. Wang 9414984, 9415513 (HKAS); SICHUAN: Kangding Co. PAOMASHAN alt. 2700m, on twigs, 3/xi/2008, H.Y. Wang 20084076, 20084078 (SDNU).

COMMENTS —The presence of cortical hairs distinguishes *Melanohalea subexasperata* from all other *Melanohalea* species. A total of eight brown

parmeliod lichens have cortical hairs. They are *Melanelixia albertana*, *M. subargentifera*, *M. glabra*, *M. villosella*, *M. subvillosella*, *Melanelia fuscosorediata*, *M. piliferella*, and *M. pseudoglabra*. *Melanelixia* species all contain lecanoric acid, while the three *Melanelia* species with cortical hairs all contain gyrophoric acid. The molecular systematics indicates *Melanelia* species containing gyrophoric acid probably belong to *Melanelixia* (Wang et al. 2009), suggesting that all known species with cortical hairs are closely related. However, the lack of lichen substance and the presence of conspicuous pseudocyphella suggest *M. subexasperata* is the member of *Melanohalea* rather than *Melanelixia*. Furthermore, *Melanohalea subexasperata* closely resembles *Melanohalea exasperata* (De Not.) O. Blanco et al., which also has evenly scattered, conical, pseudocyphellate papillae and lacks soredia, isidia, lobules, and lichen substances. Although *M. subexasperata* is certainly related to *M. exasperata*, the former can be clearly separated from the latter by smaller lobes (0.2–2 mm vs. 1–6 mm broad), the thicker hymenium (twice the thickness of the subhymenium), and, of course, the presence rather than absence of cortical hairs. Except for *M. subexasperata*, *M. septentrionalis* (Lyngé) O. Blanco et al. is the only known *Melanohalea* species where the hymenium is obviously thicker than the subhymenium. *Melanohalea septentrionalis* differs from *M. subexasperata* in the presence of fumarprotocetraric and protocetraric acids (PD+ orange) and the absence of papillae.

Acknowledgements

The project was financially supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (30870012). The authors would like to thank the lichenologist Li-Song Wang (Herbarium of Cryptogams, Kunming Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences) for assistance during specimen collection. The authors thank A. Aptroot (CBS, AD Utrecht, Netherlands) and Shou-Yu Guo (Key Laboratory of Systematic Mycology & Lichenology, Institute of Microbiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences) for presubmission reviews.

Literature cited

- Ahti T, Brodo IM, Noble WJ. 1987. Contributions to the lichen flora of British Columbia, Canada. *Mycotaxon* 28: 91–97.
- Blanco O, Crespo A, Divakar PK, Esslinger TL, Hawksworth DL, Lumbsch HT. 2004. *Melanelixia* and *Melanohalea*, two new genera segregated from *Melanelia* (*Parmeliaceae*) based on molecular and morphological data. *Mycological Research* 108(8): 873–884.
- Culberson CF. 1972. Improved conditions and new data for the identification of lichen products by a standardized thin-layer chromatographic method. *Journal of Chromatography* 72: 113–125.
- Divakar PK, Upreti DK, Elix JA. 2001. New species and new records in the lichen family *Parmeliaceae* (*Ascomycotina*) from India. *Mycotaxon* 80: 356–362.
- Divakar PK, Upreti DK, Sinha GP, Elix JA. 2003. New species and records in the lichen family *Parmeliaceae* (*Ascomycota*) from India. *Mycotaxon* 88: 149–154.

- Divakar PK, Upreti DK. 2005. A new species in *Melanohalea* (*Parmeliaceae*, *Ascomycotina*) and new lichen records from India. *Lichenologist* 37(6): 511–517.
- Egan RS. 1987. A fifth checklist of the lichen-forming, lichenicolous and allied fungi of the continental United States and Canada. *The Bryologist* 90(2): 77–173.
- Esslinger TL. 1977. A chemosystematic revision of the brown *Parmeliae*. *Journal of the Hattori Botanical Laboratory* 42: 1–211.
- Esslinger TL. 1978. A new status for the brown *Parmeliae*. *Mycotaxon* 7: 45–54.
- Esslinger TL. 1987. A new species of *Melanelia* from Nepal. *Mycotaxon* 28: 215–217.
- Esslinger TL. 1992. The brown *Parmelia* type specimens of A. N. Oxner. *Lichenologist* 24(1): 13–20.
- Galloway DJ, Jørgensen PM. 1990. *Bartlettella*, a new lichen genus from New Zealand, with notes on a new species of *Melanelia* and a new chemodeme of *Bryoria indonesica* in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 28: 5–12.
- Tell A. 1995. A new position of the *Cetraria commixta* group in *Melanelia* (*Ascomycotina*, *Parmeliaceae*). *Nova Hedwigia* 60(3–4): 407–422.
- Wang HY, Chen JB, Wei JC. 2008. A new species of *Melanelixia* (*Parmeliaceae*) from China. *Mycotaxon* 104: 185–188.
- Wang HY, Chen JB, Wei JC. 2009. A phylogenetic analysis of *Melanelia tominii* and four new records of brown parmelioid lichens from China. *Mycotaxon* 107: 163–173.